ألإمام محمد قاسم النانوتوى نورالله مرقده

Introducing

Imam Muhammad Qasim al-Nanautwi

Imam Gangohi Academy of Research
www.friendsofdeoband.com

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Dedicated to

Imam Muhammad Qasim al-Nanautwi

Imam Rashid Ahmad al-Gangohi

and all the righteous, God-fearing "Heirs of the Prophets" through the ages

May God's Mercy be on them all

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Foreword

On the outset, this compilation which is a brief background to the life and works of *Hujjat al-Islam 'Allamah al-Imam* Mawlana Muahmmad Qasim al-Siddiqui al-Nanautwi was by no means meant to have been an in-depth and thorough study. Rather the aim is to introduce to the reader, some 130 years after his demise, the personality who had shaped the religious landscape of the subcontinent and which has subsequently spread to Europe, America, and Africa. He was an academic, a fighter, an ascetic, a reviver of the time.

Sayyid Mahbub Rizwi, the compiler of the 100 year history of Dar al-'Ulum Deoband, has dedicated several pages is his work on the life of Mawlana al-Nanautwi. The was later translated into English and footnotes were added by Prof. Murtaz Husayn Qurayshi. The major portion of this introduction has been taken from Rizwi's work. Where we felt necessary we have included further footnotes to expand on certain points, introduce the '*ulama* who have been mentioned, or to narrate anecdotes, amongst others.

The life of Mawlana al-Nanautwi was such that no one book can do justice to his 48 year lifespan. As his predecessors Shaykh Ahmad al-Sirhindi and Shah Wali Allah al-Dihlawi, he had shaped an intellectual ideology that lives on till today. Hence, I was quite overwhelmed at compiling this introduction. However I felt the need for this as I am not aware of any book written or translated to English that deals exclusively with the life and works of Mawlana al-Nanautwi. This is an indictment on us that we have not fulfilled the rights of Mawlana. Hence, this work aims to inspire that this right be fulfilled and justice is done for the sacrifices and efforts of Mawlana.

The initial work on this compilation began towards the end of last year after which I halted all work on it due to the sheer magnanimity of the task at hand. However, now in the blessed and virtues month of Ramadan I have decided to release the compilation. This is by no means a complete or final edition. There are still many aspects that I have not completed researching.

In addition, a lot more work in general has to be done on the bulk of the text. It is with this thoughts that I release this compilation that some learned and well versed person takes on the task of correcting, editing, and inserting further research to give due justice to this task. In this same light I do not see in the foreseeable future this book being available in print, not until I fully feel comfortable with the contents herein.

Anyone interested in contacting me can do so through the website mentioned. As with any human effort, errors are most likely. Kindly contact me with these errors, corrections, additional information and general suggestions and/or comments. I would highly appreciate this.

Finally, I beseech that Allah Most High accept this minor and poor effort on my part. It is with the intention of keeping the legacy of our great giants of the past alive that this compilation aims to fulfil.

And peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allah (Allah bless him and grant him peace), his family, his companions and all those who follow him.

`Abd Allah bin Muhammad al-Afriqui
Johannesburg, South Africa
16 Ramadan 1434 H
25 July 2013 C

Brief Biography

He is amongst the last bearers of the legacy of Shah Wali Allah of Delhi. None stands equal to him after Shah Wali Allah in the Indian subcontinent[1] due to his revival movement and his contribution to the Islamic sciences. He was born in 1248 AH/1832 CE. In the environs of Saharanpur there is an old village, Nanauta[2], reputed for producing men of high calibre. His father was Asad 'Ali. His chronogrammatic name was Quraysh Husayn. He received primary education at his native-place after which he was sent to Deoband where he read for some time in Mawlana Mahtab 'Ali's primary school. Then he went away to his maternal grandfather at Saharanpur where the latter was practising as a pleader. In Saharanpur he studied the elementary books of Arabic grammar and syntax under the instruction of Mawlana Nawaz. At the end of 1259/1843 Mawlana Mamluk 'Ali al-Nanautwi[3] took him to Delhi. There he began the al-*Kafiyah* and read other books. Thereafter he was admitted to the Delhi College but he did not take the annual examination. Mawlana Muhammad Ya'qub al-Nanautwi writes:

> "My late father[4] got Mawlana admitted to the Government Arabic Madrasah[5] and said: 'See Euclid yourself and do exercises of arithmetic.' Af-

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[1] The part of Asia south of the Himalayas which forms a peninsula extending into the Indian Ocean, between the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. Historically forming the whole territory of greater India, the region is now divided between India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

[2] Nanauta is an old village 16 miles west of Deoband (See Illustration A, p. 34). A distinguished family of Siddiqui *shaykhs* (progeny of the first Caliph of Islam, Abu Bakr al-Siddiq) has settled here since 9th century Hijri. Mawlana al-Nanautwi belongs to this family genealogically.

[3] The teacher of teachers, Mawlana Mamluk 'Ali al-Nanautwi was one of the famed *'ulama* of his time, commanding a distinctive position among his contemporary divines. On text-books, particularly those of *Fiqh*, he had such mastery that he remembered most of the books by heart. He was one of the well-guided pupils of Mawlana Rashid al-Din Khan (d. 1249/1833), a disciple of Shah Rafi' al-Din al-Dihlawi. The circle of his students and disciples was very extensive. His inspiring art of teaching produced innumerable scholars. He was professor of Arabic sciences in the Delhi College. He died on 11th Dhu 'l-Hijjah 1267/1851, and lies buried in Shah Wali Allah's graveyard, Munhadyan, in front of the *masjid*. His grave is now untraceable.

[4] Mawlana Ya'qub's father was Mawlana Mamluk 'Ali. Mawlana Ya'qub al-Nanautwi was one of the founders and the first *Sadr Mudarris* (head principal) of Dar al-'Ulum. This post he held until his demise in 1302/1884. He lies buried in his native-place of Nanauta.

[5] Delhi College, which Mawlana Ya'qub al-Nanautwi calls Madrasah Arabiyyah Sarkari, was formerly known as Madrasah Ghazi al-Din. Ghazi al-Din Firoze Jang I (d. 1122/1710) had established it a few years before his death outside Ajmeri Gate. Firoze Jang I, after his death, was buried in the courtyard of the same *madrasah*. His grave is still extant. He was the father of Nizam al-Mulk Asaf Jah I. The ruling family of the erstwhile Hyderabad State in the Deccan descended from the same Asaf Jah I.
The double-storied building of red stone of Madrasah Ghazi al-Din, by the prevailing standard of that time, was very grand and magnificent. In 1241/1825 the East India Company changed it into Delhi College. Mr. J. H. Taylor was appointed as its first principal. In 1244/1828 an English class

> ter some days it was talked about that Mawlana had seen all the ordinary discourses and had completed the exercises of arithmetic. Munshi Zaka Allah brought some questions which were very difficult. On solving them Mawlana became very well-known. When the annual examination drew near, Mawlana did not take it and left the *madrasah*. All in the *madrasah*, particularly the head-master who was the principal English teacher, regretted this very much".[6]

Before entering Delhi College, he had read books of logic, philosophy and scholastic theology like *Mir Zahid*, *Qazi Mubarak*, *Sadra*, *Shams Bazigha* under the instruction of Mawlana Mamluk 'Ali at the latter's house. In the end he joined that study-circle which then possessed a central position in the whole of India with regard to the teaching of the sciences of the Qur'an and *Hadith*. Shah 'Abd al-Ghani al-Mujaddidi al-Dihlawi[7] was then gracing the *masnad* (seat) of knowledge of Shah Wali Allah. From him he acquired the science of *Hadith*; during his student-days itself the fame of his acuteness, knowledge and learning, comprehension and discernment had become widespread.

Mawlana al-Nanautwi's illustrious contemporary, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan[8], has expressed his impressions of the former's acuteness, knowledge and learning, as-

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was opened in this college and modern sciences were included in the course. Before this it was an Arabic *madrasah* of the oriental type.
In 1258/1842 the Delhi College was shifted from the Ajmeri Gate to a big building near Kashmiri Gate, where it continued till 1273/1857. During the violent disturbances of 1857 the college was destroyed and Mr. Taylor was killed. He had been attached to this college for nearly 30 years. In 1308/1890, it was restarted under the name of Anglo-Arabic College in the same old building of Madrasah Ghazi al-Din (old Delhi College). (Extracted from *Waqeat Dar al-Hukumat Delhi* vol. ii, pp. 562-573; by Bashir al-Din Ahmed; pub. by Shamsi Press, 1337/1919.)
Now for some years this college has been renamed Dr. Zakir Husayn College.
(Sayyid Mahboob Rizvi)

[6] *Sawanih al-Qasmi*, p. 4; pub. by Mujtabai Press, Delhi, 1311/1894. Who was this head-master? Mawlana 'Abd al-Haq writes: 'Mr. Taylor worked as head-master in Delhi College for 30 years and was also its principal for two, three years' (*Marhum Delhi College*, p. 157). Mr. Taylor was killed in the upheaval of 1857. His head-mastership began in 1241/1825. Mawlana al-Nanautwi went to Delhi in 1259/1843 for higher studies. So at that time, the same Mr. Taylor could be the head-master.

[7] Regarding Shah 'Abd al-Ghani, 'Allamah Sayyid 'Abd al-Hay al-Lakhnawi writes: "Knowledge and practice, asceticism, forbearance, truthfulness, trustworthiness, chastity, self-preservation, bona fides, sincerity, resorting to Allah, fear of Allah, conformance to the *Sunnah*, excellent morals, spiritual communion (*muraqabah*), benevolence to the people and disinclination to worldly assets;- of such qualities he was exclusively the last paragon. Many *'ulama* and *shaykhs* benefitted from the blessings of his *majlis* and his teachings. All the people of India and Arabia are unanimous as regards his greatness and saintliness. On Wednesday, the 6th of Muharram, 1296 AH, he died at Madinah and was laid to rest there." (*Nuzhat al-Khawatir*, 7:289-90)

[8] He was born on 17th October, 1817 in Delhi. He was an educator, politician and Islamic reformer. He helped pioneer modern education in India's Muslim communities through his foundation of the Aligarh Muslim University. His work inspired a new generation of Muslim reformers and led to the revival of Indian Islam in the late 19th century. Throughout his life, Sir Sayyid published several scholarly works which are well known.

ceticism and piety, understanding and discernment during student days in the following words:

> "The people thought that after Mawlana Muhammad Ishaq[9] no man like him in all those qualities was to be born, but Mawlana Muhammad Qasim has proved by his consummate righteousness, religiosity, piety, abstinence and humility that, through the education and training of this city of Delhi, Allah has created another man alike of Mawlana Muhammad Ishaq, rather superior to him in certain things.
>
> "There are many people alive who have seen Mawlana Muhammad Qasim receiving education at Delhi at a very young age. He had studied all the books under the late Mawlana Mamluk 'Ali. From the very beginning the signs of piety, abstinence, virtuousness and devotion to God were apparent from his ways and manners and the following couplet was perfectly applicable to him:
>
> 'Over his head through his intelligence was shining the star of loftiness'.
>
> "During the period of prosecuting studies, even as he was well-known and reputed for his intelligence, keenness of mind, understanding and discernment, he was equally well spoken of by men of learning and accomplishments for his virtuousness and devoutness. Mawlana Muzaffar Husayn's (al-Kandhlawi) company had inclined him very much towards conformance to the *Sunnah*, and the grace of the company of Haji Imdad Allah (Muhajjir Makki) had made his heart into a top-ranking heart. He himself conformed to the Shari'ah and the *Sunnah* and tried his level best to make people also conform to the Shari'ah and the *Sunnah*. Nevertheless, he was always anxious about the weal of the Muslims. It was through his efforts that a very useful *madrasah* for imparting the education of religious sciences was established at Deoband and a very fine *masjid* was also built. Besides this, through his effort and endeavour, Islamic *madrasahs* were established at other places too. He did not at all wish to be a mystagogue, a spiritual preceptor, and yet, thousands of people in India, particularly in the northern and western districts, believed in him and considered him to be their spiritual leader.

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[9] Shah Muhammad Ishaq was Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz's grandson (daughter's son) and a distinguished pupil. In the presence of Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz he taught *Hadith* to the students for twenty years. In 1239/1823, Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz, entrusting Madrasah Rahimiyyah before his death to Shah Muhammad Ishaq, appointed him as his successor. Till 1257/1841 he rendered the service of disseminating and propagating the science of *Hadith*. Almost the whole of India benefitted from his educational graces. He translated the *Mishkat al-Masabih* into Urdu, which, at his instance, was transformed into a commentary by his well-guided pupil, Mawlana Qutub al-Din Khan, and is known as *Mazahir al-Haq*. Emigrating from India in 1257/1841 to Makkah, he settled down there and died after a few years.

> "As regards controversial questions some people were displeased with him and he too was displeased with some, but as far as we understand we cannot impute any action of Mawlana Muhammad Qasim, whether it be of displeasure with anyone or of pleasure, to egoism, obduracy and antagonism. All the works and deeds that he performed were purely for God's sake and with an eye on the recompense of the hereafter; and he used to follow whatever he considered true, and right. Both, to be displeased or to be pleased with anyone; were for the sake of God. Mawlana Muhammad Qasim did not consider any man good or bad due to his personal relations but because a man does bad works or speaks bad things, he considered him bad for the sake of God. The question of 'love for the sake of Allah' and 'aversion for the sake of Allah' was peculiar to his treatment. All his habits were angelic. We all used to cherish sincere love for him, and such a man who may have passed his life with such virtuousness is indubitably worthy of utmost love.
>
> "In these days all people admit and perhaps those people too who dissented from him in certain open questions might be admitting that Mawlana Muhammad Qasim was a matchless man in this world. His rank in sciental knowledge in those days may perhaps be, less than that of Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz to some extent, otherwise in all other things it was superior. In humility, virtue and simplicity, if his rank was not higher than that of Mawlana Muhammad Ishaq, it was not inferior either. He was really a man of angelic habits and celestial disposition, and the world's being bereaved of the existence of such a man is the cause of extreme sorrow and regret for those who survive after him".[10]

After the completion of his education, Mawlana Nanautwi took up as a means of livelihood the work of correcting the press at Matba' Ahmadi, Delhi[11], which was then owned by Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali al-Muhaddith al-Saharanpuri[12]. In those

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[10] The late Sir Sayyid's article in *'Aligarh Institute Gazette*, dated April 24, 1880, pp. 467-8. For details, see this writer's article entitled *Hazrat Nanautavi Sir Sayyid Ki Nazar Men* included in *Sawanih al-Qasmi*, vol. 3.

[11] Matba' Ahmadi, Delhi, was a great centre for the printing and publishing of the books of *Hadith*: a pioneer press publishing books of *hadith* for the first time in India. Accordingly, *Jami' al-Tirmidhi* in 1265/1848, *Sahih al-Bukhari* in 1270/1853, and *Mishkat al-Masabih* in 1271/1854 were published with great care. This press Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali had established in 1262/1845 after his return from Hijaz. After the revolt of 1857, it was shifted to Meerut. This writer has seen the copies of *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Mishkat al-Masabih* printed by this press, in the library of the Dar al-'Ulum. As regards their marginalia it is my opinion that they are from the pen of Mawlana Ahmad himself; however, the text of the *hadith*s seems to have been written by the copy-writer.

[12] Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali al-Saharanpuri was born in 1225/1810 in Saharanpur. He studied under Mawlana Mamluk 'Ali and Mawlana Wajih al-Din. He acquired the knowledge of *Hadith* in Makkah from Shah Muhammad Ishaq al-Dihlawi in this manner that sitting in the Haram from dawn (Fajr) till noon (Zuhr), he would first copy down the hadiths and then from Zuhr till 'Asr (afternoon), he would wait upon Shah Ishaq and listen to the transcribed hadiths. All the books of *Hadith* he read before Shah Ishaq like this only.

days, at Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali's instance, he also wrote a scholium on the last few portions of *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

Mawlana Ya'qub al-Nanautwi writes:

> "Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali al-Saharanpuri entrusted the last five or six remaining portions of *Sahih al-Bukhari* for commentation and collation, and he has written it so well that now let the readers assess as to what else can be better than this. At that time some people who were not aware of Mawlana al-Nanautwi's talent had told Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali by way of an objection as to what it was that he did that he entrusted the work to a novice; and Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali had then retorted that he was not that simple that he would have done so without consideration and understanding. And then Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali showed them the scholium written by Mawlana al-Nanautwi wherefore the people came to recognise his ability. And that portion in the *Sahih al-Bukhari* is the toughest, particularly because of the undertaking for the Hanafi *madhhab* from the very beginning, and it is there that Imam Bukhari has taken exceptions to the Hanafi *madhhab* and Mawlana al-Nanautwi has given the answers there. It is known how difficult they are. Now whoever desires, let him see that place and realise what kind of scholium has been written; and it was also an undertaking in this scholium not to write anything without authentication from books and from merely one's understanding."[13]

There is no clarification in any biography of Mawlana al-Nanautwi as to when he completed his education and in which year he happened to collate the *Sahih al-Bukhari* and write a scholium on it. Only this much is known briefly from *Sawanih al-Qasmi* that soon after completing the scholastic education he had started the work of collating and correcting the press in Matba' Ahmadi, Delhi.

After completing education, he came back to India and engaged in teaching *Hadith*. Simultaneously he also published *Jami' al-Tirmidhi* from his own press in 1265/1848. After collating *Sahih al-Bukhari* and *Mishkat al-Masabih* with MSS., he got them printed with utmost care in 1270/1853 and 1271/1854 respectively. He also wrote marginalia on these books. The collation, redaction and commentation of the *Sahih al-Bukhari* took ten years. These were the maiden prints of *Hadith* books in India. Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali spent all his life in teaching and printing the books of *Hadith*. He was a great religious divine and an illustrious traditionist of his time. Outstanding contemporary *'ulama* like Mawlana Muhammad Qasim al-Nanautwi, Mawlana Sayyid Muhammad 'Ali al-Monghiri and 'Allamah Shibli Nu'mani belonged to the circle of his pupils. According to 'Allamah Nu'mani, most of the great Hanafi *'ulama* of that era were his students.
He earned his livelihood through the press and by dealing in books. Along with the wealth of knowledge, Allah had enriched him with worldly wealth also, which he used to spend lavishly on the poor and the students. In the last phase of his life he used to teach *Tafsir* and *Hadith* to the students in Madrasah Mazahir al-'Ulum, Saharanpur. He was extremely complaisant, self-effacing and contented. His academic and financial favours went a long way in the progress of the said Madrasah from which he never took any remuneration for services rendered. He died on 6th Jumad al-Awwal, 1297/1880 in Saharanpur and lies in eternal sleep in his ancestral graveyard near the 'Id Musallah.

(Sayyid Mahboob Rizvi)

[13] *Sawanih al-Qasmi*, p. 9, Matba' Mujtaba'i. Delhi. 1311/1894.

During the last phase of this period (1267/1851), Mawlana Mamluk 'Ali had died. Mawlana Ya'qub Nanautwi has written in *Sawanih al-Qasmi* as under:

> "During this time my father died on 11th Dhu 'l-Hijjah, 1267/1851. After his death I shifted to my own house. Mawlana (Muhammad Qasim) also came over to live with me. In the upper storey was lying a loose bedstead on which he used to keep lying. Till nearly one year after my father's demise I lived in Delhi. Then, due to the service in Ajmer, I had to leave Delhi. Mawlana lived alone for some time in that house, then in the printing-press, and then for some days in Dar al-Baqa. It was during that period when Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali al-Saharanpuri entrusted the last five or six remaining portions of *Sahih al-Bukhari* to Mawlana for commentation and collation".[14]

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[14] *Sawanih al-Qasmi*, p. 9.

The Period of Writing the Scholium on *Sahih al-Bukhari*

It becomes clear from the arrangement of facts in Mawlana Ya'qub al-Nanautwi's statement that Mawlana al-Nanautwi had completed his education before 1267/1851. After Dhu 'l-Hijjah 1268/1852, he passed nearly one year at Mawlana Ya'qub al-Nanautwi's house and at the end of 1268/1852, when the latter went to join his service at Ajmer, he (Mawlana al-Nanautwi) lived at other places for some days, and it was during this period that the work of writing the scholium was entrusted to him.

As regards Mawlana al-Nanautwi's class-mate, Mawlana Rashid Ahmad al-Gangohi, it is known for certain that he stayed in Delhi for four years and, completing his education in 1265/1848, he went back to his native-place.[15] Hence Mawlana al-Nanautwi's year of completion of studies can be this year (1265) only. Thus, he, as if, had finished his education at the seventeenth year.

At the end of the *Sahih al-Bukhari* published in 1322/1904 by the Matba' Mujtaba'i[16] of Delhi, it is stated that:

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[15] *Tadhkirat al-Rashid*, 1:35.

[16] Matba' Mujtaba'i, Delhi, has been a celebrated press in India. It had been initially started at Meerut by Munshi Mumtaz 'Ali. After the riotous revolution of 1857, when Matba' Ahmadi, Delhi, came to an end, Mawlana al-Nanautwi was employed by this Matba' for the collation and correction of books. In 1285/1868, when Munshi Mumtaz went for hajj, Mawlana 'Abd al-Hadi (d. 1914) obtained proprietary rights over the Matba' Mujtaba'i and thereafter printed a small-sized copy of the Qur'an from the plates prepared by Munshi Mumtaz 'Ali (for his own publication – *Ashrafi wa 'l-Hama'il*), and also published *Malfuzat Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dihlawi* and the Shah's book, *Mizan al-Balagha*, etc. After him, his son, Mawlana Qazi Bashir al-Din (d. 1945) ran this press and published some useful books like *Tadhkirat al-'Aziziyya*, etc. This press was closed down after the partition of the country.
In 1286/1869, after returning from hajj, Munshi Mumtaz 'Ali re-established Matba' Mujtaba'i, this time at Delhi instead of Meerut. In 1304/1886, he emigrated to Makkah, selling his press for Rs. 500/- to Mawlana 'Abd al-Ahad. In 1339/1920, after Mawlana 'Abd al-Ahad's demise, Matba' Mujtaba'i was divided amongst his several sons and when the whole family emigrated to Pakistan in 1366/1947, the press ceased to exit. Matba' Mujtaba'i was situated in Delhi near the Jama Masjid in Mohalla Churiwalan.
Mawlana 'Abd al-Ahad improved Matba' Mujtaba'i, Delhi, very much. In respect of accuracy, books printed in this press were considered very valuable. Its publications were much sought after for private collections of bibliophiles and institutional libraries.
Thousands of books in Arabic, Persian and Urdu were printed and published by Matba' Mujtaba'i, Delhi. Almost all the text-books of the Dars Nizami Curriculum used to be printed at this press. In short, this press has rendered a great service to the Islamic arts and sciences.
Excellent and qualified *'ulama* used to collate, redact, correct the press and write scholia in this press, amongst them the names of Mawlana Muhammad Ahsan al-Nanautwi, Mawlana Muhammad Munir al-Nanautwi, Mawlana Nizam al-Din al-Kiranwi, Mawlana Khalil al-Rahman al-Burhanpuri, Mawlana Muhammad Ishaq and Mawlana Muhammad Beg are noteworthy.
Yusuf Bukhari al-Dihlawi has stated: "Next to Matba' Nawal Kishore, Lucknow, if any other press achieved immortal fame, it was only Matba' Mujtaba'i, Delhi. It printed dozens of editions and millions of copies. It is such a great exploit that today our libraries are seen full of books of various arts and sciences" (Mawlana M. Ahsan al-Nanautwi, p. 161 & *Sawanih al-Qasmi* & "Yeh Dilli Hai" by Yusuf Bukhari, p. 103.)

> "The printer made it a general edition and thereafter his sons who have had sufficient share of the rational and the traditional sciences and Muhammadan morals, published it in 1284/1867 and then again in 1308/1890".

It says in *Hayat al-Shibli* that the *Sahih al-Bukhari* was first published in 1267/1850. The statement therein is:

> "The main achievement of Mawlana (Ahmad 'Ali) al-Saharanpuri is that with immense labour he collated, printed and published the manuscripts of *Hadith* books. Accordingly, he published the *Jami' al-Tirmidhi* in 1265/1848 and the *Sahih al-Bukhari* in 1267/1850. The late Mawlana Shibli (al-Nu'mani) used to say that his late teacher had spent full twenty years in collating the *al-Bukhari* and in writing its scholium".[17]

According to this writer, the date of printing given in the Mujtaba'i edition of the *Sahih al-Bukhari* seems to be more accurate. The chronogram derived by Mawlana Muhammad 'Umar bin Mawlana Ahmad Sa'id al-Mujaddidi and mentioned at the end of the *Sahih al-Bukhari* is "*Qad tab'a asahho kutebin b'ada kitabillah*", the numerical value of which comes to 1270.

According to the aforesaid details, the year 1269/1852 alone can be the year when Mawlana al-Nanautwi collated and wrote scholium on the last five or six portions of the *Sahih al-Bukhari*.

The year of his birth is 1248/1832 and hence at the time of correcting and writing the scholium his age can be at the most 21 years. Mawlana Manazir Ahsan Gilani has ambiguously shown it to be 22 or 23 years. He has stated: "Most probably, his respectable self's age must not have been more than 22 or 23 years".[18]

The people who were not aware of Mawlana al-Nanautwi's genius should have been necessarily surprised at this assignment to a young man of a momentous academic work like the collation and correction of and scholium-writing on the *Sahih al-Bukhari*; but the mature vision of Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali had adequately recognised the uncommon *savoir faire* and erudition of this pupil.

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[17] *Hayat al-Shibli*, 2nd ed., p. 85; Dar al-Musannafin, Azamgarh.

[18] *Sawanih al-Qasmi*, 1:351, National Press, Deoband.

The Method of Teaching Hadith

Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi has played a great part in developing that method of affirmation and preference for the Hanafi *madhhab* and that style of sifting and explanations which are today the distinctive feature of the Dar al-'Ulumand are also current and in use more or less in the lessons of *Hadith* in the Arabic *madrasahs*. Till the middle of the thirteenth century Hijri only the translation of *Hadith* and the stating of the (rulings of the) four *madhhabs* (*madhhab arba'a*) was considered enough; but when the Hanafis were accused by the Ahl al-*Hadith* very emphatically that their method was not in accordance with *Hadith*, Shah Muhammad Ishaq and some of his learned disciples paid attention to the affirmation and superiority (*tarjih*) of the Hanafi *madhhab*. In the Dar al-'Ulum Mawlana al-Nanautwi, Shaykh al-Hind (Mahmud Hasan al-Deobandi) and other '*ulama* developed it to such an extent that today no teaching institution of *Hadith* of repute is to be found devoid of it.

From Mawlana al-Nanautwi's lectures only those students could benefit adequately who were themselves talented, intelligent and sharp-witted and, moreover, might have already read the book with close attention. Mawlana al-Nanautwi's spirit, maturity of vision and power of argumentation can be estimated on the whole from his books. His statement was that: "all the commandments of the Book and the *Sunnah* are wholly rational; however, the intellect of every person cannot have access there". Hakim Mansur 'Ali Khan al-Muradabadi, who is amongst the well-guided pupils of Mawlana al-Nanautwi, writes in his *Madhhab al-Mansur* about the peculiarities of his teacher's giving lessons and lectures:

> "The fact is that whenever Mawlana al-Nanautwi proved any important and difficult proposition to be contrary to the masses' concepts, great men of light and learning used to be amazed and astonished. The commandment which looked absolutely without any argument and demonstration used to look perfectly rational after his lecture. Great men of knowledge and learning would not dare to say anything against the arguments put forth by him".[19]

The following statement of Shaykh al-Hind has been mentioned in *Arwah al-Thalathah*; he says:

> "I used to attend Mawlana al-Nanautwi's lecture after having read Shah Wali Allah's books and would ask him those things which used to be very difficult in the Shah's books. And what used to be the last answer in the

[19] *Madhhab al-Mansur*, 2:175.

> Shah's books, Mawlana (al-Nanautwi) would mention it first. I have experienced this thing several times".[20]

During the elementary period of the Dar al-'Ulum he taught Euclid for some days in the Chatta *Masjid*. During teaching whenever he felt it necessary to explain a figure to the students, he would draw the figure with his finger, without the help of instruments and explain it to the students, although he had studied mathematics and Euclid in Delhi College by himself, without the guidance of any teacher. Mawlana al-Nanautwi's lecture generally used to be within the four walls of the printing presses and was attended by particular persons only. The grace of his teaching produced such a party of accomplished, illustrious *'ulama* like Shaykh al-Hind Mawlana Mahmud Hasan al-Deobandi, Mawlana Ahmed Hasan Amrohi, Mawlana Fakhr al-Hasan al-Gangohi, etc. The example whereof is not to be seen after Shah 'Abd al-Ghani's time. And then he established the system of religious sciences through the central educational institution like the Dar al-'Ulum, which now, due to its variegated quality, is the greatest seminary in Asia.

Some peculiarities of Mawlana al-Nanautwi's teaching-work are very important. An important one among them is that he never made it a means of earning his living. Due to not being rich, he, at necessity, adopted a service for earning his livelihood, but, instead of the educational line, he sought a job of collation and emendation of books in a press; and then, contrary to the general custom, instead of increment in pay, he used to insist on decrement, and used to be content with such little pay, a mere pittance, on which he could subsist with great difficulty. He never agreed to take more than ten to fifteen *rupees* as pay. The highest post during the time that could be given to an Indian could be his - as Mawlana Ya'qub has said: 'at the slightest wink of his eyes'; as such, many of those who were his contemporaries during the educational career and were far inferior to him in academic ability had been appointed on high government posts in the education department, but he never approved of accepting an educational service. His father possessed a small plot of cultivable land and was cherishing the hope that when the son would become a religious doctor after completing education, he would get a job of reasonable salary. When Mawlana's contemporaries were appointed to good posts and he did not show any inclination towards service, his father felt very sorry and told, by way of a complaint, Haji Imdad Allah: "This was my only son on whom I had pinned many hopes. If he earned something and did service, our poverty would be removed. God knows what you have done to him that he is not willing to take up a job". Haji Imdad Allah listened and held his peace then, but later on sent him a word: "You complain of narrow circumstances. Allah Most High will give him so much even without service that he will be better off than in service, and holders of high posts will take pride in serving him".

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[20] *Arwah al-Thalathah*, anecdote no. 34.

The method of the ‘*ulama* of the former times was different from the system of teaching and learning the Arabic sciences, *madrasahs* and cliquism that prevails and is current nowadays. Generally the ‘*ulama*, sitting in their homes and *masjids*, used to teach purely for the sake of Allah; and for earning their livelihood they either took to commercial dealings or used to pass life trusting in Allah. Very often it also happened that the ‘*ulama* who did no business for livelihood, and engaged themselves in teaching, trusting in the Providence, were given reasonable stipends from the government of the day. The courage and perseverance and contentment of the heart with which Mawlana al-Nanautwi, in spite of severely unfavourable circumstances, maintained this precious practice of the predecessors behoved him only. Haji Imdad Allah used to say about him: “Formerly sometimes there used to be such people; now they do not happen to be since long”.

After having completed his educational career, Mawlana al-Nanautwi, as a means or livelihood, adopted the job of collating and emending of books in Matba’ Ahmadi, Delhi, and this remained the means of earning till the end. Along with emendation, the practice of teaching also continued. Besides the *Sihah Sittah*, he also used to teach the *Mathnawi* of Mawlana Rumi and other books, but the teaching work was done, instead of in a *madrasah*, inside the four walls of printing presses or a *masjid* or a house, where particular students only used to sit respectfully.

Humility and Independence from want

Independence from want, humility and meekness were to such a degree in his disposition that he never used the peculiar style of dress of the '*ulama* - the gown and the turban ('*imamah*). He used to feel much embarrassed by veneration. He used to say: "This nominal knowledge spoilt me otherwise I would have marred my condition so much that none would have known that a man named Qasim was at all born". He used to keep off generally from those matters in which there could be a chance of being conspicuous.[21]

In 1277/1860 he went for hajj and on return from there he took up the job of collating books in Matba' Mujtaba'i, Meerut, and remained attached to the same press till 1285/1868. Meanwhile, he again happened to go for hajj, and thereafter he joined Matba' Hashimi, Meerut. During this period the occupation of teaching continued but he never liked service in any *madrasah*. The author of *Sawanih Makhtutah* has stated:

> "It is a fact known to all that the Madrasah Islami'ah of Deoband was founded and developed by him only, and what a small government it is, this establishment; but he never took advantage of anything. In the incipience the members of the council requested him to accept teachership in this *madrasah* and in return for it a meagre salary, but he did not accept and at no time, by any manner or method, tolerated to have even a grain from the *madrasah*, although day and night he used to be busy in the good management of the *madrasah* and engaged in teaching. If perchance he wrote any of his letters with the pen and ink-pot of the *madrasah*, he would immediately pay one *anna* (Indian currency) to the treasury of the *madrasah*".[22]

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[21] *Sawanih al-Qasmi*, p. 10.

[22] *Sawanih Makhtutah*, p.536.

Services for the Preservation of Islam

Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi's greatest and most glorious achievement is the revivifying of an educational movement for the renaissance of religious sciences in India and the formulation of those guiding principles for the religious schools on which their survival depends. Through his attention and persuasion religious *madrasahs* were started at different places, like Thana Bhawan (Dist. Muzaffarnagar), Gulaothi (Dist. Buland Shahar), Kerana (Dist. Muzaffarnagar), Danpur (Dist. Buland Shahar), Meerut, Moradabad, etc. Most of them still exist, rendering educational and religious services in their vicinity, the details of which will be given in the third chapter.

Shoulder to shoulder with the English power, Christianity too had risen high in India and prodigious efforts had been made to convert the people of India, particularly the Muslims, to Christianity in every possible way. With the support and co-operation of the (East India) Company, bases of Christian preaching and organisation were established throughout the length and breadth of the country, and after the revolution of 1857/ I274, this system received further impetus and expansion. Priests began to impeach and impugn Islam and the Prophet of Islam (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) in the markets, fairs and common gatherings. When Mawlana al-Nanautwi, during the period of his stay in Delhi witnessed this situation, he also ordered his pupils to stand like that in public places to give sermons and repugn and repudiate the padres. One day he himself, without introduction and giving out his name, reached a gathering and, breaking lance with Padre Tara Chand, repulsed him publicly in a market. Thereafter he came to be introduced with the famous polemic of Islam, Mawlana Abu 'l-Mansur Nasir al-Din 'Ali al-Dihlawi (d. 1320/1920). This event took place between Rabi' al-Awwal 1292 and Jumad al-Thani 1292. This was the period when Mawlana al-Nanautwi was staying in Munshi Mumtaz 'Ali's Matba' Mujtaba'i, Delhi.

Fair for God-Consciousness at Shahjahanpur

A dangerous conspiracy hatched by the English government was that it set the Hindus against the Muslims. The Muslims had once had political importance and supremacy in India. The English now, under their policy, pushed up the Hindus and brought down the Muslims. When the Hindus advanced in the economic and political fields, the English prompted them towards the path of religious superiority and prepared them to break lance with the Muslims, and provided the opportunities for this that the Hindus polemise with the Muslims openly.

Then, on May 8, 1876, a "Fair for God-Consciousness" was held at Chandapur village, near Shahjahanpur, under the auspices of the local *zamindar*[23], Piyare Lal Kabir-Panthi, under the management of Rev. Knowles, and with the support and permission of the collector of Shahjahanpur, Mr. Robert George. Representatives of all the three religions, Christian, Hindu and Muslim, were invited through posters to attend and prove the truthfulness of their respective religions. At the suggestion of Mawlana Muhammad Munir al-Nanautwi and Mawlana Ilahi Bakhsh Rangin al-Barelwi, Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi, accompanied by (Shaykh al-Hind) Mawlana Mahmud Hasan al-Deobandi, Mawlana Rahim Allah al-Bijnori and Mawlana Fakhr al-Hasan al-Gangohi, reached the fair. Besides Mawlana al-Nanautwi, Mawlana Abu 'l-Mansur al-Dihlawi, Mirza Mujid Jullunduri, Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali al-Dihlawi, Mir Hayder al-Dihlawi, Mawlana Nu'man bin Luqman and Mawlana Rangin al-Barelwi also participated. All these '*ulama* delivered speeches at this fair, causing the desired effect. In repudiation of the Doctrine of Trinity and Polytheism, and on affirmation of Divine Unity (monotheism), Mawlana al-Nanautwi spoke so well that the audience, both those who were against and those who were for him, were convinced.[24]

One newspaper writes:

> "In the gathering of 8th May of the current year (1876), Muhammad Qasim gave a lecture and stated the merits of Islam. The Christian reverend explained the Trinity in a strange manner, saying that in a line are found three attributes: length, breadth and depth, and thus Trinity is

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[23] A *zamindar* was an aristocrat in Mughal- and British-India, typically hereditary, who held enormous tracts of land and held control over his peasants, from whom the *zamindars* reserved the right to collect tax (often for military purposes). Over time, they took princely and royal titles such as *Nawab* (Lord), *Mirza* (Prince), etc.

('Abd Allah bin Rashid Ahmad)

[24] The famous lectures Mawlana al-Nanautwi delivered during the Fair of God Conciousness held in Shahjahanpur were published later under the title *Taqrir Dil Padhir* and *Mubahithah Shahjahanpur*. His opponents have praised his method of polemical discussion and his command on Islamic religious philosophy and theology. For Instance, Rev. Frank has written: "I will not say, whether he (Mawlana al-Nanautwi) has said truth, but if the faith was matter of lectures, then we would have professed faith of Islam based on his lectures." (*Waqi'ah Maylah Khuda Shanasi* (Events of Fair of God Consciousness), p. 41, Meerut: 1876.)

(Dr. Atif Suhayl Siddiqui)

> proven in every way. The said Mawlana confuted it promptly. Then, while the Padre and the Mawlana were debating regarding the speech, the meeting broke up, and in the vicinity and on all sides arose the outcry that the Muslims had won. Wherever a religious divine of Islam stood, thousands of men would gather around him. In the meeting of the first day the Christians did not reply to the objections raised by the followers of Islam, while the Muslims replied the Christians word by word and won."[25]

In the following year this "fair" was held again in March, 1877. This time Munshi Indraman of Moradabad and Pundit Dayanand Saraswati (d. 1301/1882), the founder of the Arya Samaj Hindu movement, also participated. Dayanand spoke in sanskritised Hindi. Rev. Knowles had called another priest, Rev. Scot also[26]. Mawlana al-Nanautwi's speeches were delivered on theism, monotheism, and interpolation in religion, and proved very successful.

The duties of providing boarding and lodging to the *'ulama* of Islam were discharged this time by Muhammad Tahir Moti Miyan.[27]

Mawlana al-Nanautwi, participating both the years in the said fair, frustrated the Christians conspiracy. On this occasion, Prof. Muhammad Ayyub Qadiri, writing in Mawlana Ahmad Hasan al-Nanautwi's biography, says that:

> "One thing specially deserves deliberation here that the fair for God consciousness at Shahjahanpur was held consecutively for two years with an-

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[25] Akhbar "Khayr-khwah-e Alam", Delhi, dated 19th May, 1876, referred to in *Tarikh Sahafat Urdu*, vol. 2, pt. 1, p. 441-2. Also vide *The Arya Samaj* (English) by Dewan Chand, p. 122.

[26] According to Bawa C. Singh in his book on Dayanand Saraswati writes regarding this "fair" of 1877 and those who attended it in the following words: "First of all came the famous Vedic Scholar and Founder of the Arya Samaj Swami Dayanand Saraswati, accompanied by the well-known opponent of the Muslim Faith, Munshi Indramani of Muradabad a man who was a complete master of Arabic and Persian, and a critical student of both the Quran and the Traditions. These two gentlemen, deeply interested in religious matters, arrived at Chandapur on 15th March, 1877.

"On behalf of the Christian religion came, on 19th March, 1877, the famous logician and profound scholar, author of many learned pamphlets and of commentary on the Bible - the Rev. T.G. Scott, accompanied by Rev. Mr. Noble, the Rev. Mr. Parker, and the Rev. Mr. John Thompson, and several other Missionaries of knowledge. And on behalf of the Muhammadans came, on the same day and at the same time, Molwi Muhammad Qasim, the Principal of Deoband School, the most distinguished Arabic Seminary in India, the author of a delightful treatise or rhetoric, and the awarder of diplomas to Molwis, accompanied by Sayyad Abu 'l-Mansur of Delhi, the foremost man in literary discussions, the author of works like the *Zinda Javais*, written against Christianity, and the holder of a diploma from His Imperial Highness, the Sultan of Turkey, as a recognition of his scholarship, and by many other gentlemen." (*Life and Teachings of Swami Dayanand Saraswati*, p. 124)

('Abd Allah bin Rashid Ahmad)

[27] Mawlana Manazir Ahsan Gilani has written Muhammad Tahir Moti Miyan to be among the progeny of Shah Madan Shahabadi (d. 1188 H), but this is not correct. Moti Miyan was the great-grandson of Mawlana Madan (Majd al-Din) (d. 1228 H). Moti Miyan bin Mawlana 'Abd Allah bin Mawlana Nizam al-Din bin Mawlana Majd al-Din alias Mawlana Madan. (Vide *Tarikh Shahjahanpur* by Miyan Sabih al-Din, p. 147-157, Lucknow, 1932.)

nouncement and publicity, throwing in a way, a challenge to the religion of Islam and yet one does not find a clue to any interest the ‘*ulama* of Bareilly and Badaun, the two districts so near, almost contiguous to Shahjahanpur, may have evinced in this fair.”[28]

[28] Mawlana Muhammad Ahsan, al-Nanautwi, p. 221.

The Polemic at Roorke

In Shawwal, 1294/1877, Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi, with a party of eminent '*ulama* went for hajj and returned from there in Rabi' al-Awwal, 1295/1877. On his way back, he fell ill at Jeddah. After reaching his native-place, he recovered somewhat but the disease was not fully cured. The same year, in Sha'ban 1295, he received information from Roorke (Dist. Hardiwar) that Pundit Dayanand had reached there and was levelling objections against Islam. Mawlana al-Nanautwi, despite his weakness and illness, went to Roorke and however much he wished to have a debate with the Pundit in a public gathering; the latter did not agree and left Roorke.[29] Then, at Mawlana al-Nanautwi's instance, Mawlana Fakhr al-Hasan al-Gangohi and Mawlana Mahmud Hasan al-Deobandi delivered lectures in public meetings and threw a challenge to the Pundit. Mawlana al-Nanautwi gave replies to his objections in public meetings and, thereafter, wrote a treatise on *Istiqbal al-Qiblah* (the direction of the Ka'bah towards which the Muslims turn their faces in prayer but do not actually worship it).[30]

Thereafter the Pundit reached Meerut and there too he adopted the same manner. At the request of the Muslims of Meerut, Mawlana al-Nanautwi went to Meerut. There also the Pundit did not agree to have a debate. So, Mawlana al-Nanautwi gave replies to his objections in a forceful speech he delivered in a public meeting at Meerut.[31]

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[29] Mawlana al-Nanautwi writes about the Pundit leaving Roorke hastily: "Far are the replies, Pundit chose his way, sitting on a bullock cart he departed rapidly." (*Qiblah Numa*, p. 2, Delhi: 1907.)

[30] Vide *Intesar al-Islam* by Mawlana al-Nanautwi, p. 2-7, Deoband: 1952.

[31] Mawlana al-Nanautwi replied to Saraswati's objection on Islam. He wrote *Qiblah Numa* and *Intasar al-Islam.* Before composing these two aforementioned books, Mawlana al-Nanautwi exchanged numerous letters with Saraswati. These letters are mentioned in the biography of Dayanand Saraswati. The quality of the contents and language of these letters can be guessed by the remarks of Saraswati in his reply. Saraswati writes: "The letters of yours, which I received yesterday, were of such quality in the contents and language that I felt it beyond wisdom to reply you without a thorough consideration and muse." (*Jivan Charitra Maharishi Swami Dayanand*, p. 534, Lahore: Union Steam Press.)

Reformative Movement for Widow Re-marriage

Bringing into currency the re-marriage of widows is also a glorious social and reformative achievement of Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi. Till the end of the thirteenth century hijri the re-marriage of widows was considered very reproachful. People used to feel its disgracefulness but no one had the courage to put an end to it. By the laudable efforts of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, Mawlana Muhammad Isma'il Shahid al-Dihlawi[32], Mawlana Mamluk 'Ali al-Nanautwi, Mawlana Muzaffar Husayn al- Kandhlawi, Mawlana Muhammad Ahsan al-Nanautwi and Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi, the remarriage of widows came very much into vogue. Mawlana al-Nanautwi, making his widowed sister, who was much older than himself and had become quite old, prepared for re-marriage, broke up this disgraceful custom in such a way that now no one knows that such a custom once prevailed here.

[32] Mawlana Ashraf 'Ali al-Thanawi writes in *Arwah al-Thalathahi*: "[Amir Shah] Khan related that Mawlana al-Nanautwi loved every individual of the Wali Allah family. However, he had nothing less than ardour *('ishq)* for Mawlana [Isma'il] Shahid. He was unable to bear listening to anyone else talk about him. In such an instance, he would interject and begin talking about him himself." (*Arwah al-Thalathah*, p. 168.) Mawlana al-Thanawai says that this interjection would be done in such a beautiful manner that the speaker would not be offended

Participation in the Fight for Freedom

After the fall of the Mughal Empire, Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi actively participated in the armed struggle against the British colonialists. Taking manly part in the battle for independence in 1857[33], he captured the tahsil[34] of Shamli in Muzaffarnagar district but the corrupted political atmosphere prevailing at that time did not let him advance further from Shamli. This incident of re-counter at Shamli is so well-known that it needs not to be repeated here. He changed the policy. Mawlana al-Nanautwi realised that it is the time to protect the faith of Muslims from corruption, ignorance and deviation. Instead of fighting with the sword against British colonialism the most important duty is to protect the faith of millions of downtrodden Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. Thousands of *'ulama* had been hanged by the cruel British colonialists and British Government had provided all possible support to the Christian Missionaries to convert mainly Muslims to Christianity.

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[33] Concerning the 1857 Battle of Independence, which is referred to in British history as the Indian Rebellion or Mutiny of 1857, Mawlana Burhan al-Din Qasmi writes: "In 1857 another edict for *Jihad* was issued. The edict carried the signature of 34 *'ulama*. Prominent among them were Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi, the founder of Dar al-'Ulum Deoband, Mawlana Rashid Ahmad al-Gangohi and Hafiz Muhammad Dhamin Shahid who fought the British army under the leadership of Haji Imdad Allah at Shamli (Saharanpur, UP)." (*Recounting Untold History: Dar al-'Ulum Deoband a heroic struggle against the British tyranny*, Mumbai: 2001)

[34] An administrative area in parts of India (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

Establishment of Dar al-'Ulum Deoband

Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi had studied the example of Spain which had lost the identity of Islam after the collapse of Islamic rule there, he realised that only through a solid network of Islamic seminaries throughout the country will the community be served in the best way; it will be the best method to keep alive the spirit of faith amongst the Muslim. Thus, on Thursday, 15th Muharram, 1283 (May 30, 1866), the small town of Deoband (Dist. Saharanpur) got this fortune that a centre of Islamic religious sciences was established by a young Mawlana al-Nanautwi. Teaching began in the Chatta *Masjid* with one teacher, Mullah Mahmud[35], and one student, Mahmud Hasan, who later became Shaykh al-Hind[36]. The *madrasah* was named Madrasah Arabiyyah Islamiyyah Deoband.[37]

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[35] He was the outstanding student of Shah 'Abd al-Ghani al-Mujaddid al-Dihlawi. Shah 'Abd al-Ghani wrote a *hashiya* (footnotes) on the *Sunan* of Imam Ibn Majah, entitled *Inhah al-Hajah*. He was assisted in this by Mullah Mahmud. (*Al-Deobandiyyah: Ta'rifuha wa'l-Khidmatuha*, p. 143)

[36] Mawlana 'Ubayd Allah al-Sindhi writes about his teacher, Mawlana Mahmud Hasan al-Deobandi: "Shaykh al-Hind Mawlana Mahmud Hasan was my teacher. During my stay at Dar al-'Ulum Deoband my sole reliance was upon him. His father's name was Dhu 'l-Fiqar 'Ali. His genealogy stretches back to the Umayyad branch of the Quraysh.

Mawlana Mahmud Hasan was born in 1268/1851. He gained primary education from his father and paternal uncle. He gained admission into the *madrasah* of Deoband when it was founded in 1283/1866, and studied under Mawlana Muhammad Ya'qub al-Nanautwi and Mawlana Mahmud Deobandi. He remained in the company of Mawlana Muhammad Qasim al-Nanautwi and benefited from him immensely. He sought permission from Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali al-Saharanpuri, Shaykh Muhammad Mazhar al-Nanautwi and Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman al-Panipati to teach and impart knowledge. Considering him worthy of such a post, they all granted him *ijazah.*

When Mawlana al-Nanautwi visited Madinah, he also obtained *ijazah* for Mawlana Mahmud Hasan from Mawlana 'Abd al-Ghani. Apart from him, Mawlana Mahmud Hasan also derived benefit from Haji Imdad Allah in compliance with the instruction of Mawlana al-Nanautwi.

From among the elders who attained knowledge from Mawlana al-Nanautwi, three came to be especially renowned and distinguished. However, from them, Shaykh al-Hind loved his teacher the most. He was the chief inheritor of his teacher's knowledge, and was his most ardent follower. I studied Mawlana al-Nanautwi 'sbook *Hujjat al-Islam* from him. Whilst studying the book, I would, at times, feel as if knowledge and faith was descending into my heart from above. My belief regarding the blessed person of Shaykh al-Hind is that he was naturally endowed with intelligence and sagacity. He may be considered amongst those [learned] personalities whom, in the terminology of Shah Wali Allah, are called '*mufahhamun*.' He was greatly devoted to his teacher and would zealously attempt to follow him. He inherited the disposition (*nisbah*) of humility and selflessness from Mawlana al-Nanautwi. Shah Wali Allah has identified this *nisbah* as that of the Ahl al-Bayt in his books. Shaykh al-Hind passed away on the 18th of Rabi' al-Awwal 1339, corresponding to the 3rd of November 1920, a full one hundred years after the death of Imam 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Dihlawi." (*Shah Wali Allah awr unki Siyasi Tahrik*, p. 203-204, Sindh Sagar Academy: 2008)

[37] Mawlana al-Nanautwi outlined the purpose of establishing the Dar al-'Ulum in the following words: "The English have perpetrated boundless acts of tyranny against the Muslims for their fault, if at all it was a fault, of the uprising in 1857 and their relentless endeavour for the independence of this country thereafter. They have left no stone unturned to plunder and obliterate the Islamic arts and science, Muslim culture and civilization. Endowments of Muslim educational institutions have been confiscated and as a result state funded schools have been virtually closed. It is therefore, necessary to adopt other method instead of relying upon the old system of endowments." (*Recounting Untold History*)

This *madrasah* was aimed to bring the change in the social, political, economic and religious conditions of the Indian subcontinent Muslims. The intention to serve Islamic knowledge was accepted by Allah that the fame of this small institute had, within few decades, spread throughout the world. The *madrasah*, with lack of equipment and infrastructure, was destined to become the largest centre for the dissemination of Islamic knowledge in the Indian subcontinent. Before long, students desirous of studying the Book and the Sunnah, Shari'ah and Tariqah, began to flock here in droves from the Indian subcontinent as well as from neighbouring and distant countries like Afghanistan, Iran, Bukhara and Samarqand, Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey and the far off regions of the continent of Africa, and within a short-time the radiant rays of knowledge and wisdom illumined the heart and mind of the Muslims of the continent of Asia with the light of faith and the culture of Islam. From Madrasa Arabiyyah Islamiyyah it was elevated to the status of Jami'ah Islamiyyah Dar al-'Ulum Deoband.

Constitution of Dar al-‘Ulum

During the ear when the Dar al-‘Ulum Deoband, was established, the old *madaris* in India had almost become extinct, and the condition of the two or four that had survived the ravages of time was not better than that of a few glow-worms in a dark night. Apparently, it seemed at that time as if the Islamic sciences had packed up their kit from India. Under these circumstances, Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi and his God-fearing fellows through their inner light sensed the imminent dangers. They knew it too well that nations have attained their right status through knowledge only. So, without depending upon the government of the time, they founded the Dar al-‘Ulum, Deoband, with public contributions and co-operation. One of the principles that Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi proposed for the Dar al-‘Ulum and other religious *madaris* is that these institutes should be run trusting in Allah and with public contributions for which the masses alone should be relied upon.

In this constitution Mawlana al-Nanautwi has shown that the following principles should be the fundamentals for the establishment of seminaries:

1. The functionaries of the *madrasah*, as far as possible, should always have an eye to the augmentation of the donation. 'Make an effort and also persuade others to do the same'. The well-wishers of the *madrasah* must always keep this thing in mind.
2. The well-wishers of the *madrasah*, as far as they can, should endeavour for the continuous supply of food to the students; rather, for increasing the number of students.
3. The counsellors of the *madrasah* should always bear in mind that the *madrasah* should acquire well-being and excellence, and no one should be unyielding in one's opinion. God forbid! If it comes to such a pass that the counsellors consider opposition to their own opinion and their subscribing to the opinions of others unpalatable, then the foundation of the *madrasah* will become shaky. In short, a counsel from the bottom of one's heart in season and, in its context, the excellence of the *madrasah* must always be kept in mind. There should be no sticking to one's guns out of bigotry; hence it is necessary that the counsellors should on no account be hesitant in expressing their opinions, and the audience should always hear them with good faith; i.e., it might be contrary to the opinion of some, it would be accepted with heart and soul. And for the same reason the Vice-Chancellor (Muhtamim) also must necessarily seek the counsellors' advice in all important matters, whether they be the regular counsellors of the *ma-*

drasah or any intelligent, knowledgeable visitor who may be a well-wisher of the *madrasah*. Over and above this, it is also necessary that if the Vice-Chancellor due to some reason, does not chance to consult all the counsellors but may have taken counsel from a proper quorum of them, one should not feel displeased for not being consulted. A counsellor, however, can of course take exception if the Vice-Chancellor may not have consulted any one.

4. It is a very necessary thing that all the teachers be of the same humour (*mashrab*), and neither presumptuous like the other religious divines of the time nor be after insulting each other. God forbid! If such a turn comes to pass, this *madrasah* will be plunged into hot waters; it will be imperilled.
5. The fixed syllabus already prescribed or to be prescribed later through some other deliberation should always be completed; otherwise the *madrasah* will, firstly, not have good strength, and even if it does get good strength, it will be useless.
6. So long as there are no regular means of income for this *madrasah*, it will go on like this, if it pleases Allah, provided we pin our faith in Him. But if some assured income is obtained, e.g., a fief or a commercial establishment or the promise of a staunch man of means, then it seems that this state of fear and hope which is the source of our appealing to Allah will slip off our fingers, divine succour will cease and mutual disputes will ensue among the functionaries. In short, a destitution of sorts should always, be kept in mind.
7. The participation of the government as also that of the affluent appears to be very harmful.
8. The donation of such people who can afford as much as they can and do not expect fame from it seems to cause more prosperity (*barakah*). On the whole, the donor's good faith appears to be the provision for greater durability.

Qari Muhammad Tayyib has very apophthegmatically elucidated these eight principles which have been published in a separate pamphlet entitled *Azadi-e-Hind ka ek Khamosh Rahnuma*. In the first, second, sixth, seventh, eighth clauses of this constitution, pubic donation has been specifically suggested as the substitute for endowments, and at the same time it has also been stressed that it is necessary to abstain from assured sources of income as otherwise hope and fear which are the real cause of appealing to Allah will be lost.

Demise

Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi passed away on Thursday, 4th Jumad al-Awwal, 1297/1880, at the age of 49 years. His sacred grave is to the north of the Dar al-'Ulum, clay-built according to the sunnah practice. The graveyard is known as the Qasmi Cemetery, where countless '*ulama*, students, pious men and other people are lying buried.

Many people wrote chronogrammatic quatrains on Mawlana al-Nanautwi's death. The one composed in Urdu by Mawlana Fazl al-Rahman 'Uthmani is still hanging in the vice-chancellor's office. Just to give an idea at the thoughts expressed in it, the English translation of the verses is given below:

> "Such is the sorrow caused by the passing away of the Qasim of the assembly of guidance that every heart (interior) is sipping the draught of grief. Such is sorrow that thereby the cup of the assembly of spiritual knowledge is inverted like the cask at the sky. Not only is the earth pallid due to this sorrow; the attire of the sky too is bluish in this mourning. Though the supporters of the Shari'ah have had boundless sorrow, the wayfarers of the Path are suffering it doubly. Where's the true supporter of the *madrasah* of religion that without him the realm of knowledge and action is desolate? Don't ask about the condition of the sad hearts at the thirsty seekers of knowledge, as to how their life is in your separation. If the flame of separation has grilled the liver, the fire of the grief of separation has roasted the heart. However, from your sacred grave, O good-natured one, your devotees do have a patience of sorts. Out of anguish wrote Fazl this year of death: '*Wafat Sarware-e-Alam ka yeh namuna hay*'[38] (this is a specimen of the death at the Chief of the World)."

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[38] The numerical value of the Urdu letters at the last half-verse totals up to 1297 AH.

Introduction to Literary Works

Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi has left behind more than two dozen books to perpetuate his memory. In his time he set his pen to paper on those questions which were mostly on the tapis then. All his books have been written in response to one query or the other. Munshi Mumtaz 'Ali[39], proprietor of Matba' Mujtaba'i, Delhi, in 1292/1875, had chalked out a programme to publish all of Mawlana al-Nanautwi's[40] works. In the advertisement of this programme printed by him, he had stated:

> "Many gentlemen would know Mawlana Muhammad Qasim. He avoids contention and disputation and passes an independent life in a condition of detachment. If someone sent him a query regarding some difficult proposition from a distant land, he would write its answer, otherwise he hasn't anything to do with anyone. And why should he have, for he has no trace of carnality in him? This slave is enamoured of his independent way of life and fond of his disquisitional writings. For a long time I was contemplating to secure his writings somehow and, having printed them, show the tamasha of divine omnipotence to the high-minded people of the time. He had a prodigious talent in proving the religio-legal propositions with rational arguments and in refuting the philosophers' propositions also with the same rational arguments".[41]

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[39] Munshi Mumtaz 'Ali ibn Shaykh Amjad 'Ali al-Mirathi was a celebrated calligraphist of his time. *Nuzhat al-Raqam* was his title and in calligraphy he was a disciple of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the last Mughal emperor. Copies of the Qur'an written by him have had great importance as regards accuracy and orthography. The circle of Munshi's disciples was very vast. Formerly he used to work as a copyist in Delhi at Mawlana Ahmad 'Ali al-Saharanpuri's Matba' Ahmadi. After the revolution of 1857 he set up his own press in Meerut under the name of Matba' Mujtaba'i. Mawlana al-Nanautwi used to work in the same press. In 1258/1868, when Munshi went for hajj, Mawlana 'Abd al-Hadi acquired the rights of running Matba' Mujtaba'i. Next year, after returning from hajj, he established, in 1286/1869, his Matba' Mujtaba'i in Delhi instead of Meerut. In 1304/1886, when Munshi determined to emigrate to Makkah, he sold the press to Mawlana 'Abd al-Ahad for Rs. 500/-. There is mention of Munshi Mumtaz 'Ali in Mirza Ghalib's (d. 1869) letters. It was he who had published first Ghalib's *Oud-e Hindi* in his Matba' Mujtaba'i at Meerut.

(Sayyid Mahboob Rizvi)

[40] Some of Mawlana al-Nanautwi's unpublished works are preserved at the Mufti Ilahi Bakhsh Academy, Kandhla (Dist. Muzaffarnagar).

[41] Mawlana Muhammad Ahsan al-Nanautwi, p. 225.

His Literary Works

Whatever Mawlana Qasim al-Nanautwi left behind in terms of literary works contains high quality intellectual discourse. They are full with evidences of his extreme intellectual height and Islamic wisdom. Most of his work is in defence of Islamic beliefs. His writings match the writings of Imam al-Ghazali. During the time Imam Mohammad Qasim al-Nanawtawi lived the Hindu and Christian thinkers were involved in polemic against Islam. Imam Nanawtawi wrote dialectical treatises, books and replies. Some of his available writings are his sermons and the lectures during the face to face debates with Hindu and Christian polemicists.

Below is a list of some of the books and treatises written by Mawlana al-Nanautwi:

1. ***Aab al-Hayat*****:** One of the most astounding works of Mawlana al-Nanautwi. Even though in the Urdu language, this book remains to be one of the most eloquent works amongst the Islamic texts and it has been remarked to be written as "a test for the *'ulama*" by Mawlana Husayn Ahmad al-Madani. It was written in the year 1286, on the topic of the life of the Prophet and it was approved by Haji Imdad Allah during the days of pilgrimage.[42]
2. ***Tasfiyat al-'Aqa'id*****:** An epistle containing replies to the questions raised by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and refutation to his ideology and those who follow him.[43]
3. ***Israr al-Qur'ani*****:** An epistle, in Persian, containing replies to questions related to different Qur'anic verses asked by Muhammad Siddiq al-Muradabadi.
4. ***Tahdhir al-Nas min Inkar Athar Ibn 'Abbas*****:** An epistle, in Arabic, dedicated to the exegesis of the Qur'anic verse of the "Seal of the Prophets;" written to prove that Messenger of Allah (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) was the last of the Prophets in all manners, conditions and aspects. It also includes the approval and endorsement of 'Allamah 'Abd al-Hay al-

[42] Mufti Mahmud Hasan al-Gangohi mentions: "When Mawlana al-Nanautwi intended to go for *Hajj,* he thought of taking a gift for his *shaykh*, Haji Imdad Allah. He decided to take a book that he had written entitled *Aab al-Hayat*. When he reached Makkah, he presented the book to Haji Imdad Allah who requested him to read it to him. Haji fixed a certain time for it to be read and he listened attentively to the entire recitation. He also suggested a few corrections at certain places. Thereafter he said, "The tongue of Shams Tabrizi was Mawlana Rumi and Mawlana Muhammad Qasim is my tongue. Whatever thoughts are inspired into my heart, are interpreted by him." (*Malfuzat Faqih al-Ummah*, 2:366)

[43] Raj Bahadur Sharma writes: "In 1873 or 1874, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, drafted fifteen principles on religious beliefs and submitted them to the *'ulama* of Saharanpur to which Mawlana Muhammad Qasim al-Nanautwi sent a detailed reply entitled *Tasfiyat al-'Aqa'id*." (*Christian Missions in North India 1813-1913: A Case Study of Meerut Division and Dehra Dun District*, p. 190. 1988)

Lakhnawi[44] and other *'ulama* in the end. The Ahl al-Barelwi have raised false accusations on Mawlana al-Nanautwi, based on this treatise, by mis-interpreting and distorting his statements in it.[45]

5. ***Intisar al-Islam*:** An epistle containing replies to ten questions raised by the Arya Samaj Hindu reform movement. The work differentiates itself due to the uniqueness of having two replies to every question, logical and investigational.

6. ***Hujjat al-Islam*:** A comprehensive epistle on the obligatory beliefs of Islam. It is written in a manner to explain beliefs on an intellectual level, making it a good read for both Muslims and non-Muslims. It is mentioned that Mawlana al-Nanautwi wrote it in one day.

7. ***Intibah al-Mu'minin*:** An epistle on the commentary of the *Hadith* of *Jami' al-Tirmidhi* in which the Messenger of Allah (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) mentioned the four Caliphs and their specific merits.

8. ***Al-Haqq al-Sarih fi'l- Itbat al-Tarawih (Persian):*** An epistle written in refutation to 'Abd al-Rahim Khan on the legality of twenty *rak'ah* of *Tarawih*. It also includes a discussion on the narration of the Sa'ib ibn Yazid (Allah be pleased with him) and refutation to all the doubts raised regarding it.

9. ***Masabih al-Tarawih*:** A work, in Persian, on the legality of twenty *rak'ah* in the prayers of *Tarawih*.

10. ***Israr al-Taharah:*** A jurisprudential epistle that covers the topic of cleanliness and a remarkable explanation of the reason behind the nullification of ablution upon the release of wind.

11. ***Hadiyat al-Shi'ah:*** A refutation of the Shi'is and replies to question raised by them. It was written on the request of Mawlana Rashid Ahmad al-Gangohi and it covers topics such as the Caliphate, the land of Fadak, dissimulation along with many others that resolve around Shi'i-Sunni polemics.

12. ***Al-Ajwibah al-Arba'in*:** A detailed work refuting the Shi'is.

13. ***Al-Ajwibah al-Kamilah fi 'l-Usul al-Khamilah***

14. ***Al-Dalil al-Muhkam fi 'l-Tark al-Qira'ah li 'l-Mu'tam***

15. ***Barahin al-Qasmiyah***

16. ***Guftugu al-Madhhabi***

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[44] Vide 'Allamah 'Abd al-Hay al-Lakhnawi's *Zajr al-Nas 'ala Inkar Athar Ibn Abbas*. For English translation, see here: http://tinyurl.com/bykz76s

[45] Vide Mawlana Khalil Ahmad Saharanpuri's defence of *Tahdir al-Nas* in *Al-Muhannad 'ala al-Mufannad*. For English translation, see here: http://tinyurl.com/aqzyq46
Vide Mawlana Manzur Nu'mani's answer to Barelwi misrepresentation in *Fayslah kun Munazrah*. For English translation, see here: http://tinyurl.com/a7yjcdt
For English summary of the contentious piece from *Tahdir al-Nas*, see here: http://tinyurl.com/bjyls56

17. ***Jawab Turki ba Turki***
18. ***Mubahithah Shahjahanpur*:** Collection of lectures that were delivered during the Fair for God-consciousness at Shahjahanpur in 1876.
19. ***Munazirah al-Ajibah***
20. ***Qasa'id Qasmi***
21. ***Qasim al-'Ulum*:** A collection of his epistles and treatises. Has been translated into Urdu as *Anwar al-Nujum*.
22. ***Qiblah Numa*:** A philosophical and theological composition. It was written in reply to Pundit Saraswati's objections against facing towards the Ka'bah during prayer.
23. ***Taqrir Dil Padhir***

Illustration A: Regional Map

Nanauta, Mawlana al-Nanautwi's birthplace, indicated by the red flag.

